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Metaphorical Symbols Used in Linkin Park's Song Lyrics and its Contribution to Teaching Poetry

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Abstract

The objectives of this study are: 1) to find out the meaning of metaphorical symbols in *Linkin Park's* song lyrics; 2) to find out the contribution of *Linkin Park's* song lyrics to teaching poetry. In this study, the writer applies the descriptive qualitative approach in this study to analyze implicit meaning of metaphorical symbols used in *Linkin Park's* song lyrics. Besides that, the writer wants to describe its contribution to teaching poetry. The finding show that the writer found 38 metaphorical symbols in the five *Linkin Park's* song lyric. It consists of 4 symbols in the *Numb*, 14 symbols in *Hands Held High*, 5 symbols in *What I've done*, 5 symbols in *New Divide*, 10 symbols in *Final Masquerade*. Through using those song lyrics, the students can learn the figurative languages which can be found in those song lyrics, especially metaphorical symbols. The students can understand the meaning of the metaphorical symbols which can enrich their vocabulary through learn the examples of implicit meaning analysis in this study. So they are able to choose and combine the appropriate dictions. Finally, they will be able to create a good poetry which has deep and beautiful meaning. The writer suggests that the teachers should use an appropriate and interesting learning source in teaching writing and appreciating poetry. Song lyrics in *Linkin Park* consist of a lot of words, phrases, and sentences with the figurative language, especially metaphorical symbols which has implicit and deep meaning. Through delivering those songs lyrics, the students will get the inspiration and motivation in writing and appreciating poetry.

Keywords: *Metaphorical Symbol, Lyric, Poetry*

INTRODUCTION

Everybody needs an entertainment in their lives. Without entertainment, people are under pressure after doing their daily activities along the day. One thing that most people enjoy is enjoying literary

work. According to Risdianto in his book entitled *Introduction to Literature* (2010:5), literature is a sense of entertaining display and provides pleasure in addition to the element of 'truth' involved. Unfortunately, many people are bored to read novels, watch the drama,

even enjoying a poem. But in fact, most people like listening to the song. Song can be enjoyed by a lot of people without regarding their gender, educational background, age even their country. People are not only enjoying song, but also creating remarkable song with beautiful lyrics and music.

Song can be categorized as literature because it has similarities with one of literature genres, that is a poem. There are some similarities between a song and a poem. Either song or poem consists of verses and stanzas united to be a lyric. Usually, the songwriters express their ideas, thoughts, and feeling through song lyrics that he or she made. Besides that, song also has rhythmic and so does a poem. Rhythm is one of the important elements in both songs and poem. In fact, there is even a form of poem which is made into music called a poem lyric. Rhythm can make the song and poem more beautiful to be enjoyed.

In creating song, the songwriters usually deliver the meaning to other. The meaning can be communicated to people through signs or symbols in song lyrics. Songwriters usually use metaphorical symbols in their songs to create more beautiful and nicer song's lyrics, and help the listeners to understand the meaning of the song deeply. Metaphorical symbols can communicate the things that the songwriter

thought and sense. It is supported by the statement from Zbikowski in his journal entitled *Metaphor and music theory: Reflections from cognitive science* (2009: 85), metaphor is regarded as simply one of number of rhetorical figures to be used in the service of argument, persuasion, illumination, and entertainment. Metaphor in the song lyric is the songwriter's emotion to express something touches his/her heart and thought which he or she experienced in real daily life.

Therefore, to analyze the metaphorical symbols in literary works, people can use semiotic study. According to Morentin (2010: 15), semiotic is the cognitive ability that humanity have for the production of sign of all kinds: iconic, indexical, and symbolic, to give with them ontological existence to its humanness. Basically, semiotic study is how to learn the human signify the things. In this case, signify can not be mixed with communicate. The meaning of signify is all objects are not only carry information, but also the has structured system of signs. Semiotic can be explained as the knowledge or theory about how the human learn the meaning of sign around them. The sign around the human is anything that can be represented by the experiences, thoughts, ideas, or emotions. Therefore, semiotic study is used to reveal the implicit meaning in the sign.

Mastering knowledge about implicit meaning of sign and symbols is needed by the teacher to teaching poetry to their students. It is aimed to touch students' heart through creating beautiful language which has deep meaning. In fact, teaching writing poem is not an easy job. The teachers have to understand the metaphorical symbols and collect a lot of vocabularies which can build the poem more beautiful to be enjoyed. Through learning this study, hopefully the teacher and the students have a reference to create the good poem which has implicit meanings to create the amazing effect to the readers.

Nowadays, there are so many good songs with beautiful lyrics by a lot of singers or bands. One of them is Linkin Park. Linkin Park (LP) is one of the greatest rock bands in the world. There are many good songs released by LP and success in the world market. In this study, the writer used the hits songs from Linkin Park, such as; *Numb*, *Hand Held High*, *What I've done*, *New Divide*, and *Final masquerade* (Taken from www.imdb.com, accessed on 11/04/2016).

Linkin Park band is the best rock band all the time in rock music industry. Almost 30 million copies spread around the world. Lyrical themes in this album told the listener about any aspect of human life through beautiful that gas deep

meaning, such as racism, poverty, social, romance, children, and environment.

Metaphorical symbols make the song has beautiful words, deep meaning, nice to listen, touch the listeners' heart. So, the writer is interested to explore the connotative meaning of metaphorical symbols in the song lyrics of *Linkin Park*.

Teaching poetry to the students is aimed to touch the heart of students with more intensity and immediacy that some of poem counterparts. The topics of poetry such as, identity, discovery, family relationship, survival, change, morality, hope, and dream are primary interest the students in searching the self-awareness in an uncertain world.

The questions focused on this study are:

1. What are the meaning of metaphorical symbols used in the *Linkin Park's* song lyrics?
2. What is the contribution of *Linkin Park's* song lyrics in teaching poetry?

REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES

The writer found journals which have relationship with the topic of the research. First, the writer used journal from Heimlich (2008:1) entitled "*The Metaphoric Use of Song Lyrics as Paraverbal Communication*". The result shows that song lyrics used metaphorically are particularly helpful as a medium for

communication with children who do not respond adequately to traditional treatment approaches. Next, the writer uses journal from Shorta (2000:1) entitled “*Metaphor in Nightwish’s Dark Passion Play Album*”. The findings of the study show that there are 83 occurrences of eight types of metaphor. They are active metaphor (8), inactive metaphor (3), subjective metaphor (3), mimetic metaphor (17), phenomenistic metaphor (4), precision metaphor (7), symbolism metaphor (18), and approximate metaphor (23).

Poetry

Poetry is categorized as one of literature genres means the written or verbal language that is structured rhythmically and is meant to tell a story, or express any kind of emotion, feeling, and idea to the readers.

Next, Ollila and Jantas (2006:1) states that: poetry is any kind of verbal or written language that is structured rhythmically and is meant to tell a story, or express any kind of emotion, idea, or state of being. The word poetry in etymologist term derived from the Greek word *poesis* which means establishing, forming, making, or creating. Poetry is one of the literary works that its words are arranged according to certain conditions with the use of rhythm, rhyme and sometimes uses metaphorical words. Poetry is a form of

literary works that express the thoughts, emotion, and feelings of the writer and it is composed in beautiful language which have implicit meanings to create the amazing effect to the readers.

Lyric

Lyric is a set of words that make up a song. The word lyric came to be used for the words of a song. The writer of lyrics is a *lyricist* or *lyrist*. Language found in the lyrics is not much different from the language in poetry.

General Concept of Semiotic Study

The concept semiotics is derived from Greek word *semion*, which means a sign. Semiotic is therefore concerned with everything that can be taken as significantly substituting for something else, such as experiences, thoughts, ideas, or emotions.

Metaphorical Symbols in Semiotic Study

Based on Fadaee (2010:21), the word *metaphor* etymologically comes from Greek *metaphora* which means to carry over or transfer from place to another place or other region. Metaphor is used to express the meaning that based on the similarities and comparison. In literary work, the metaphor is used to convey the implicit meaning. So, metaphor delivers

the indirect or hidden meaning to the readers.

Implicit Meaning

The metaphor or commonly called as icon in the literary works will raise the interpretation in somebody's mind both in connotative and denotative meaning. Bouzida (2014: 1) states that semiotics; also called semiology was first used by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in the early twentieth century. As semiology is concerned with the general properties of sign language and other signal forms, it would be obvious to say that semiotics is the science of signs that allowed the proliferation of a number of perspectives and paved the way to other cultural phenomena that raised the study of signs through its denotative and connotative meanings.

Linkin Park Biography

Linkin Park is the most popular metal band around the world. They have sold over 3 million albums since the release of their stunning debut 'Hybrid Theory', which is still in the billboard top 20 almost a year after its release. According to Graham (2002:1) in the book entitled *Linkin Park: The Unauthorized Biography in Words and Pictures (Book Series)* Paperback states that *Linkin Park* was founded by three high school friends:

Mike Shinoda, Rob Bourdon, and Brad Delson.

There are some best album which are released by *Linkin Park*. Based on the magazine *Rolling Stone* written by Steve Vai (2002:16) *Linkin Park* released *Hybrid Theory* on October 24, 2002. The album, which represented half a decade's worth of the band's work, was edited by Don Gilmore. *Hybrid Theory* was a massive commercial success; it sold more than 4.8 million copies during its debut year, earning it the status of best-selling album of 2002, while singles such as "Crawling" and "One Step Closer" established themselves as staples among alternative rock radio play lists during the year.

Teaching Poetry to the Students of the Objectives

Teaching literature is not easy as you have to study and understand the writer's viewpoints and styles in his or her literary works. It is also not right if you are just going to read a literary piece in front of your class. This method seems so boring and very traditional. Students may not like the way you teach. The teachers will know this if they keep yawning. This indicates that the teachers are not keeping the class alive and alert.

RESEARCH METHOD

There are many kinds of research design, and one of them is a descriptive research. This study conducts a descriptive research with qualitative analysis. That means to give the description of a phenomenon systematically, factually and accurately. According to Cohen (2007: 462), qualitative approach is the research that was done for the purpose of understanding social phenomena, social being used in a broad sense.

Every study needs an object to be analyzed. This study concerned with observing the meaning of metaphorical symbols used in the *Linkin Park's* song lyrics. Besides that, the writer explained the contribution of this analysis in teaching poetry.

Source of the data is the research subject where the data is obtained. The writer uses the songs lyrics of *Linkin Park* to be analyzed implicit meaning of metaphorical symbols. Besides the lyrics itself, the writer also obtained the data from some books and articles which are related to the topic discussed. Those written source of the data give the writer information about literature comprehensively to be combined with the analysis of songs lyrics by *Linkin Park* to make this study understand easily. There are five song lyrics that the writer analyzes, such as *Numb*, *Hand Held High*,

What I've done, *New Divide*, and *Final masquerade*

The method to collect the data is applied in this study. The writer used following steps to collect the data:

1. The writer searched the material in internet. The writer chose 10 songs then limited them into 5 songs. In this case, the song lyrics were copied from <http://www.elyrics.net/read/m/linkinpark-lyrics/>. (Accesed on 11/04/2016)
2. The writer read the song lyrics carefully to get the understanding with the meaning of the lyrics.
3. The writer collected some references that related to the study to support this analysis. The writer used the library facilities and internet to collect some books and articles.
4. The writer classified the lyrics into sentences to find the metaphor in each of the sentence.
5. The writer analyzed *Linkin Park's* song lyrics to find out the implicit meaning of metaphorical symbols.
6. The writer described the contribution of *Linkin Park's* song lyrics in teaching poetry.

In literary research, the analysis was started from the beginning time when the data collection was collected. After obtaining the data, the writer attempted to analyze them by interpreting them through extensive explanations and details which

are referred to as descriptions. The analysis is done by giving the depth description of implicit meaning of metaphorical symbols used in song lyrics by *Linkin Park*. From the descriptions, the writer drew the conclusions of the analysis. There, the writer only analyzed the metaphor in narrow sense. The writer analyzed the meaning of metaphorical symbols that related with the theme of the song.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Meaning of Metaphorical Symbols Used in The *Linkin Park's* Song Lyrics

The writer found 38 metaphorical symbols in the five *Linkin Park's* song lyrics. From the song entitled *Numb*, the writer found 4 metaphorical symbols. Those are: “*under the surface*” which has a meaning the upset feeling in a certain condition; “*walking in your shoes*” which has a meaning the feeling of under pressure by being pushed to always follow the orders; “*smothering me*” which has a meaning torturing or annoying; and “*you were just like me*” which has a meaning does not judge harshly.

In the second song which is entitled *Hands Held High*, the writer finds 14 metaphorical symbols. They

are: ‘*turn my mic up louder*’ which has a meaning the people’s protest about the war; “*the syllables get pumping*” means there are a lot of words which are gathered to picture the protest about war; “*let the sun in*” which has a meaning the demand to the government to save or cure the war victims; “*sick*” has implicit meaning he felt bored and annoy; “*brand*” has implicit meaning as there are different reasons why war happened; “*fuckers*” has implicit meaning that there are people who get the advantage from the war; “*rest of the world*” has implicit meaning the people around the world are worried about the war which destroyed everything; ‘*the world is cold*’ which has a meaning the mess situation because of war; “*brush the dust*” has implicit meaning as the soldiers’ brutality in the war; “*a broken spine*” has implicit meaning as the scare memories; “*quote*” has implicit meaning as the hope. ‘*hands held high into a sky*’ which has a meaning the voice of freedom; The word “*ocean*” has implicit meaning as the people’s anger toward the government because of war; “*The drum*” is a symbol for the way of songwriter to say or show people how bad this war really is and how the leaders just keep getting what they want without any regard for the people they lead.

The third song entitled *What I've done* can be found 5 metaphorical symbols, they are: “farewell” has implicit meaning about trying to move on; “the truth of a thousand lies” has implicit meaning that there are so much lies which happen; “mercy” has implicit meaning as the God’s help and gift; and “slate” has implicit meaning the songwriter’s sins; “pain” has implicit meaning as the trials and challenges.

The fourth song entitled “*New Divide*” can be found 5 metaphorical symbols, such as: “black sky” has implicit meaning as the terrible condition; “lightening” has implicit meaning as the trouble; “wash” means the songwriter wants to be cleaned and be forgiven; “deserve” has implicit meaning as regretting something; and “hole” means the space or the range in the relationship.

The last song entitled “*Final Masquerade*” can be found 10 metaphorical symbols, such as: “words” has implicit meaning that he said good bye; “tomorrow” has implicit meaning as the future; “something” has implicit meaning as the peace in the relationship; “light on the horizon” has implicit meaning as the mercy; “shadows floating over” has implicit meaning that everything was going smoothly; “slipped away” as

metaphorical symbols has implicit meaning denying the promise; “masquerade” has implicit meaning as the mask; “secret” has implicit meaning as the promise; word “see” has implicit meaning as the acceptance; “left behind” has implicit meaning as the memories.

2. The Contribution of The *Linkin Park’s* Song Lyrics to Teaching Poetry.

The writer explains the contribution of *Linkin Park’s* song lyrics is in teaching poetry. It can be described as follows:

a. The contribution in writing poetry

The students need a media which can inspire and teach how to create a beautiful poetry. The song lyrics such as *Numb, Hand Held High, What I've done, New Divide, and Final masquerade* of *Linkin Park* can be the learning sources which can be used by the teachers in delivering the literature subject, especially in teaching poetry.

Through delivering those song lyrics, the students can learn the meaning of the metaphorical symbols which can enrich their vocabulary through learn the examples of implicit meaning analysis in this study. So they are

able to choose and combine the appropriate dictions. As the result, they will be able to create a good poetry which has deep and beautiful meaning which they want to convey to the reader.

b. Contribution in appreciating poetry.

In teaching appreciating poetry, the teacher can ask the students for listen to the songs in *Linkin Park's* song lyrics. When they are listening to the songs, the students read the song lyrics to get the understanding of the meaning and moral values which conveyed in the songs.

The songs in the *Linkin Park's* song lyrics contain a lot of moral values which can be taught to the students. Through learning and knowing the moral values in the songs, the students will be interested and have the motivation and desire in learning poetry.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings above, the first song lyric entitled *Numb* was dominated by the sorrowful feeling. For example “*faithless*” in the 2nd verse indicated that he felt depression. The writer analyzed “*faithless*” indicated that he felt depression because this song lyrics told someone who felt very stress living in under pressure because the theme of the

song is under pressure. He had to fulfill someone’s desire and demand. From this situation, he felt bored, angry, sorrow, and faithless because he is pushed to obey.

The metaphor in *Hand Held High* conveyed the protest and satire to the government’s decisions. The symbol *dark* in phrase “*Sick of the dark ways*” shows how bad this war really is and how the leaders just keep getting what they want without any regard for the people they lead. *Hand Held High* conveyed the protest to the government through the metaphorical symbols in song lyric.

What I've Done tells about trying to move on and become something better than you were the day before. The metaphorical symbols in this song lyric drew his regret and forgiveness in past time in this song because the theme of the song is regretting. This song is about facing the mistakes and demons from the past and accepting them without condemning ourselves.

New Divide song lyrics can be interpreted as the journey of someone who discovers his new life after the dark in the past. In this song, the songwriter wants to be cleaned or be forgiven all his mistakes because the theme of the song is the new life. He knew and realized that he had ever made a lot of mistake that hurt the one he loved.

The phrase *Final Masquerade* indicates that there is a veil that separates the two parties from connecting emotionally. Thus, the relationship ends up looking more like a farce than a legitimate one. It also explains how people become so firm in their beliefs and think they are right because the theme of the song is the last disguise. As a result they end up being stubborn. This leads to the demise of any bonds between them.

In the research findings above, the writer presented contribution of *Linkin Park's* song lyrics to teaching poetry. There are two ways in teaching poetry to the students, namely; teaching writing or theory poetry and teaching appreciate poetry. The song lyrics such *Numb, Hand Held High, What I've done, New Divide,* and *Final Masquerade* as the learning sources which can be used by the teachers in teaching poetry. By using those song lyrics, the students can learn the metaphorical symbols which can be found in those song lyrics, especially metaphorical symbols. The students can understand the meaning of the metaphorical symbols which can enrich their vocabulary through learn the examples of implicit meaning analysis in this study. So they are able to choose and combine the appropriate dictions. Finally, they will be able to create a good poetry which has deep and beautiful words.

In teaching appreciation poetry, the teacher can ask the students for listen to the songs of the *Linkin Park*. When they are listening to the songs, the students read the song lyrics to get the understanding of the meaning and moral values which conveyed in the songs. The songs of the *Linkin Park* contain a lot of moral values which can be taught to the students. By learning and knowing the moral values in the songs, the students will be interested and have the motivation in learning poetry.

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